

[Elario L. Cardova]

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[Folkstuff?] - Rangelore

Gauthier, Sheldon F.

Rangelore.

Tarrant Co., Dist., #7 [70?]

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Elario [L. Cardova?], 77, living at 300 E. 12 St., was born Nov.,3,1861, in [Nacodoches?] co., at the farm of his father's, whose name was [Casanero?] Cardova. The farm was located seven miles E. of the town of [Nacodoches?]. In addition to farming, Cardova raised cattle which grazed on the free range, and hogs which also hunted their living in the woods adjacent to the farm. Elario's first recollection regarding cattle was seeing [a?] herd begin driven past his home by soldiers. When Elario was eight months old his father died. The family [continued?] to cultivate the land and when Elario was old enough to assist with the [farm?] work he worked in the fields. When he was in his tenth year, his mother married the second time and at this time Elario left home to make his own way in the [world?]. He went to Goliad co., and secured employment on a cattle ranch. He followed ranch work until he was 21 years old. During his ranch career he saw some of the conflict which took place on the range. [When?] he quit the range he returned to the farm for his livelihood and then later entered the retail [business?] which he still follows.

His story of range life follows:

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"I was born, reared and lived in the State of Texas, the [entire?] period of my life to date. So far as I know I shall remain in the State the remainder of my life. Whether or not I have done wisely and have remained in the best State of these United States, I can not say. Because I don't know anything about the other States, except what I have learned reading the papers, using the phrase the late Will Rogers used.

"My parents were born in the Nacodoches section. My [grand?] parents came to America from Spain. C12 - 2/11/41 - Texas 2 My grandmother's family, on my mothers side of the family, came to Texas from Barcelona Spain, at the time Spain ruled this section of America.

"The Spanish Government made a grant of land to my grandmother, Rachel Del Los Santes [Coez?], and her three brothers. The [grant?] consisted of 11 leagues of land in the Nacodoches section. Later, as the records will now show, one league was surveyed and [conveyed?] to Casanero Cardova, my father, by the Del Los Santos Coez people.

"The Del Los Santos Coez family came to America as agents of the Spanish Government. Part of their duties were to learn the Indian Language and customs, and then deal with the Indians in behalf of the Government. The family first stopped at Cohuila, which was then the seat of Government for this Spanish territory. Their stay at Cohuila was for the purpose of studing the Indian language. After completing their study, the family then proceeded to the Nacodoches territory and lived on the land of their grant. "One this tract of land my father and mother was born reared and lived until their death. There I was born reared and lived until I was in my tenth year.

"The date of my father's death was July, 3, 1862. My father died eight months after my birth, which was Nov., 3, 1861. My grandparents were dead, except grandmother Del Los Santos Coez, and she lived with my parents.

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"I was the youngest of all the four children. My oldest brother was about 15 at the time of my father's death. He and mother managed the cultivation of our farm land.

"My recollection starts with a scene during the Civil War. 3 The scene was a herd of cattle being driven past our home by a party of Confederate Soldiers. They were traveling E. and my guess is that the cattle were being driven to some point for the Army's supply of beef. Seeing them Soldiers and herd of cattle is the only thing about the Civil War which happened that registered on my mind.

"For me to say my family suffered any deprivation or not, after father's death and during the Civil War period, I must base my statement on guesses and what mother told me. So far as I could learn, we had plenty to eat and wear at all times. When I became old enough to retain impressions, I know then we had all the food and clothing necessary to live well.

"Our farm consisted of about 50 acres under cultivation and about 50 acres in pasture for our milk cows and work stock. In addition to our farming we owned longhorn cattle which ranged on the unsettled land.

"Farms were all fenced and were situated far apart, leaving great tracts of land for the cattle to graze on. To tell you how many cattle we owned is impossible. The number may have been 500 or 1000. We didn't give the cattle any attention. The cattle bred and multiplied at their will, and found their own living on the range where it suited their taste. All we did to hold the herd was to provide salt licks in the section we desired the animals to make their bedding ground.

"When we needed a little beef or made a sale, we held a little roundup and cut out the critters desired. 4 "In the spring of the year we worked [?] the whole section of the range, branding all calves with a cow carrying our 'CC' brand. Others did the same thing and,

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therefore, the cattle were almost all branded. While doing the branding cattle of various brands would be encountered, and frequently a brand would be seen that did not belong to any one in our section. Perhaps the critter belonged with a herd a hundred miles away. No doubt some of the cattle of our [ection?] would stray the same distance away.

“From what I have said you may gather the fact we did not depend on cattle for our livelihood, and that is correct. The farm is where we applied our efforts. It furnished our living with the assistance from the wild game, fish, cattle, and wild fruit, nuts and berries.

“As part of our farm work we raised hogs, using the same method we employed raising the cattle. The hogs bred, ranged and obtained their living in the woods. The only feed we fed the hogs was a little corn once each week. We did this to hold the hogs close to the farm. They ranged a distance of 10 miles away at times, but stayed within a distance of five miles most of the time.

“The hogs were always in good flesh condition, and in the Fall the beast would be very fat. The animals lived on what we called mass, which was nuts, herbs, weeds, and grass that the woods produced in abundance. Hogs so raised and fed grew into tasty meat, due mostly to the amount of nuts they consumed.

“All the settlers raised their hogs the same way we did, and each owner adopted a mark with which their hogs were marked. The 5 hog's ears were the place used for making, and the marks were generally made by slitting, clipping, or punching holes in a certain manner and part of one or both ears.

“With the woods containing hundreds of hogs and cattle, and wild turkey, pheasants, grouse, rabbits, deer and other game, there was no shortage of meat. All we needed to do when we needed any of the various kinds of meat was to spend a little time to catch the desired beast or fowl.

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"On the cultivated land we raised vegetables, corn, wheat and cane which was used to supply our table and feed the work stock. We raised cotton for our money crop.

"We took our wheat and corn to the settlement's grist mill where it was milled. A portion of the grist was retained by the miller as pay for the milling charge. This we obtained our meal and flour without the use of money. Our truck garden supplied us with all the vegetables, and more, than we could eat. The cane patch produced an abundance of sorghum and sugar. The wild honey bees made and stored a great amount of honey in the hollow trees, from which we secured as much honey we cared to consume. Thus our sweats were obtained without the use of money.

"We obtained our berries and fruits from the wild vegetation in the woods. The wild strawberries grew in abundance in certain low spots and were the sweatest berry I have ever have tasted. The wild apple, grapes and plums grew in the woods in great quantities. Thus our fruit was obtained without the use of money. Likewise, nuts of various kinds, such as the pecan, hazel and chestnut.

"Our clothing supply was almost wholly made from the well 6 off of our sheep ad cotton, which was spun and woven by us farm folks. Therefore, our clothes were obtained without the use of much money. There was some money spent for thread and buttons, and our shoes was the major clothing bill.

"We needed money for taxes, which was neglible, money for spices, tea, coffee and medicine. We used very little money for medicine, because grandmother concocted almost all we used and we suffered very little with sickness.

"Our cotton supply sold for enough money to meet all our needs with a blance left after [?] bill were paid. At times a cattle buyer would come through our section and we would sell a few critters, which added to our cotton crop [oney?].

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"Under the conditions existing with us those days in the Nacodoches country, as I have related, it was impossible for us to be in want, unless we were too indolent to help our selves to nature's bounteous supply.

"We lived on a proper variety of excellent food. However, our clothes were coarse and did not follow the changing fashion. To be sure, we wore no two or three tone ensemble. However, I am sure we appreciated a new pair of ordinary boots as greatly as the folks of today do their three tone ensemble.

"Our work stock were the longhorn steers. When hitched together the horns of each would extend over the neck of the other animal, and while being driven, one could hear the horns bumping and clashing as the beast walked or trotted on their way. 7 "We lepta a few mustangs which were used for riding. If one desired to travel to some place, hoss back was the means of locomotion. If the whole family desired to make a trip, the reliable ox team hitched to a wagon was the means of traveling.

"I, as all other boys of those days, learned to ride a mustang at an early age. I could ride a gentel hoss at the age of five, and could handle to ordinary mustang, for all general purposes, at the age of 10 years.

"My mother married the second time when I was 10 years old, and then I left home to make my own living. That I have done ever since.

"The cattle range was about the only place a young farm boy could secure employment. Consequently, I went to the open range county where large ranches were established, and I choose Goliad co., as the place to find work. I was successful and was given work on a ranch owned by the Hughes brothers. That was in 1871.

"I traveled from Nacodoches co., to Goliad co., on a mustang given to me by my mother. I did not try to secure a job until I arrived in Goliad co., because I was enjoying the scenery,

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and desired to travel. By the time I had arrived in Goliad co., my supply of food was too low for comfort and then I began to ask for work.

"I was no precocious child in size or ability, but was above the average 10 year old boy in size. I told the folks I was 12 years old and could easily pass myself off as being that age. I, not having ever been away from home, was somewhat verdant, and my experience handling cattle was limited to that I had learned assisting my folks to handle our cattle.

"The Hughes outfit ranged their cattle adjacent to the San Antonio River, and during a wet period bog holes became numerous. The outfit needed some one to keep a watch for bogged critters. The work did not require a top hand or one with the strength of a man. I could meet the requirements and there began my career as a cowhand.

"My mount did the hard part of my job and that was the pulling bogged critters out of the holes. When I located a bogged animal, I put the loop around its horns, with the rope tied to the saddle horn, the horse then did the hauling, pulling from the saddle.

"I did bog work for about two years and during that time I had an opportunity to learn much about all the various range work. The old rawhides taught me the finer points of handling the lasso, riding a pitching horse and other technique of the cowboy's work.

"I was paid \$15 a month at the start of my cowboy career and at the end of two years was receiving \$25 as my monthly pay.

"During the two years I worked pulling mired critters out of bog holes, I slept in the bunk house every night, but I was away all day. After breakfast I would place a piece of meat, bread and a canteen of water in my saddle bag and ride away and return about dusk. When I returned I could do a man's job at the table even if I were only a slip of a lad.

"We were fed well on plain food, consisting principally of meat, beans, canned vegetables and corn bread.

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"I graduated to the regular general cowhands work after the 9 second year and then I lived behind the chuck wagon about half of the time. The general Spring and Fall roundups kept us busy about six months of the year, and during all the roundup period we slept in the open and ate our chuck sitting on our haunches. Then, frequently between roundups we would be away from headquarters to roundup cattle and cut out critters for sale.

"The Hughes outfit made a few drives, but sold almost all their cattle to drovers who came through the country buying cattle to make up driving herds. The Hughes outfit ranged around 10,000 head and when they made a drive to market it was necessary for them to buy other critters to complete a herd to be a paying drive, because their herd would not supply from 3000 to 3500 without cutting into the breeders.

"The roundups were participated in by all the cattlemen of the section. The different brands would be separated and the strays driven back to their home range. The roundup crews worked from one section of the range to another, and when the roundup was completed all the cattle would be on their home range. Then again, from time to time a few would stry off, principally during storms, so by the time the next roundup was held the various brands would be more or less mixed.

"The branding of the range cattle was done during the roundup. The branding was performed by a branding crew. The cutting crew would call out the brand to be applied as the calf was being drugged to where the irons were being heated in a fire. The cutters would note the mother cow's brand and yell to the brand man. For 10 instance assume they called for "BH", then the brander would answer "BH" and then the checker would repeat the letters. The "BH" brand would be applied and noted in the record book. At the end of the roundup, each outfit was given a record of the number of their calves branded.

"In the morning the cooky would be up before daylight preparing breakfast. It would generally consist of broiled or fried steak, sourdough bread cooked in a dutch-oven, gravy called sop, syrup called lick, and black coffee. Breakfast over, all the riders whose job

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was to ride the range and gather the cattle, could mount and ride off, on what was called the swing. Perhaps they would ride 10 or 15 miles before arriving at the place where the gathering work for the day was to be did.

“The morning swing was always a race. The waddies always rode the best hosses in their string and it was a contest for the lead [?] not be in the rear. All waddies took pride in their mounts and each tried to ride the best mount on the range.

“The waddies would saddle their mounts while waiting for their chuck, and soon as the meal was eaten they would mount and wait for the range boss to give word to be off. While waiting for the signal, some of the hosses would be pitching with their riders cussing, some would be prancing and some standing quietly. When the, perhaps 20 or more, waddies were all mounted, the boss would yell, 'let 'em go,' and away the mounted crew would dash. They would spur their hosses and the animals would dig their hoofs into the ground to attain the best speed, traveling over varied terrain. They travel over hard ground, then sand and next it may be a rough rocky way, but to be 11 a worthy cow hoss, the animal had to have ability and travel over any kind of ground.

“The rider who was left behind was the object of all kinds of jibs, such as, 'you should change that cotton wood stick-hoss for a piece of oak or why don't you do the running and carry your weak brother.' The swings were always enjoyed, especially by the participants.

“The time when the swing would return with a herd of cattle, depended on the distance they had to go, nature of the country and had badly the cattle were scattered. Frequently the swing would return in the fore part of the evening. The herd would be turned over to the holding crew and the swing boys then would relax until the next morning. After resting for a little while, then more or less of the swing crew would engage in various kinds of sport. Hoss racing, shooting, roping or some other past time would be engaged in.

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"My career on the range was during the period when there was a great deal of conflict among the ranches of the Goliad range territory.

"I happened to secure a job with an outfit which was not only called rustlers, but where classed as one of the leaders of the rustlers. However, they maintained that they were defending the rights of the small ranches against the impositions of the large ranchers. Bud Brookings ranch was another place classed as a haven for rustlers by the large ranchers. On the other side were what people referred to as the "[ures?]" and almost all were large ranch owners, such as Buck Pittes, Faint and the Ragglings. 12 "I never learned of any stealing done by the Hughes outfit, but their cowhands branded unbranded cattle wherever any were located.

"During the Civil War and for a period after the War ceased, branding was neglected by many cattleman. Also, very few cattle were sent to market, because the market was cut off from Texas. The lack of sales resulted in a large increase of cattle. Therefore, the two conditions produced thousands of cattle which were unbranded.

"A few years after the War ceased, railroads extended W. into Kans., and markets were established within driving distance of Texas. Then the prices went up which resulted in a scramble to brand those cattle without a brand. Naturally, ranchers maintained they had a superior claim to the unbranded cattle within the section which they called their home range, and any unbranded cattle grazing with the cattle carrying their brand. This claim was generally accepted as proper, but there were some folks who did not confine their branding strictly within their territory.

"Branding cattle in territory claimed by some other rancher, led to trouble and many killings. The conflict developed two contending parties.

"The small fellows claimed that the "Pures" were claiming too much territory, for the purpose of excluding the small ranchers, and to take undue advantage with the unbranded

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cattle. The small ranches, and some people who never had a herd, ignored the "Pures" claims to territory and branded cattle where found. "Some of the "Rures" paid a bonus to their cowhands for each unbranded animal they branded, and that method created too much 13 branding activity to develop in some of the waddies. These conditions started arguments, which progressed into quarrels and ended in many shootings and killings.

"The "Pure" organized vigilante committees, which operated secretly and set out to clean out the rustlers. In the section were some thieves, but when the vigilantes began to operate they classed many cattle branders as rustlers and many men were run out of the country who were not real thieves.

"John Baker, who has lived in Fort Worth during the last few years, was served notice to leave Goliad co., because he worked for the Brookings outfit, also, several others who worked for the outfit. Some of the waddies working for the Hughes outfit received notice to leave.

"The system of giving notices was to place a notice on the lental post or send it through the mail, telling the party to be W. of the San Antonio River by a specified time or take the consequences.

Hamp Davis, who worked for Hughes, received a notice to leave. About time Jim Simpson and Adire Miller, who worked for Bud Brookings, also received their warning to leave. These men were just a few of the many to whom notices were sent. After receiving a notice, it was unsafe for one to go off of his home range, unless he was traveling to cross the river within the specified time. Many made the mistake of doing otherwise.

"Hamp Davis made the mistake off of his range territory without sufficient company. As it happened, he was ready to get married and 13 continued to carry out his wedding plans. Hamp married and was traveling in a buggy with his bride to visit some friend after the specified time he was given to be W. of the river. The vigilantes caught his at a lonely spot in the road. He was taken out of the buggy, from the side of his bride, hanged to a limb

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of a tree and shot full of holes. I know that Hamp didn't steal any cattle, but he did brand cattle with the brand of the Hughes outfit.

"John Baker's uncle, Bob Baker, from some where N. of Goliad co., came after John to save him from the vigilantes. John later went to the Double [Mount?] in section of Stonewall co.

"Jim Simpson left the country. Adire Miller refuse to leave and his body was found in the river with a stone tied around his neck.

"During this period of [?] I remained close to the home range. If one desired to go some where, he had to go with a party of several persons, who were ready to [swap?] lead. A person was quite safe with a crowd, because the vigilantes did not attack except when they had the drop on their victim.

"The matter was eventually settled by the Rangers and other officials taking a hand in the matter and the unbranded cattle finally disappeared, which removed the main cause of the strife.

"After all the unbranded cattle disappeared from the open range the conflict among the ranchers ended, but there remained the rustlees and strife continued between rancher and [?]. 14 "Both cattle and hosses were the object of rustlers. The rustlers, as a rule, would cover up their depredation by changing the brand. Some of the rustlers did/ an artistic [job?] working a brand over. Usually the rustlers worked in company of two or more. Each would register brand which would be similar to a brand of a large rancher. To illustrate, we shall presume a OX brand esisted. The rustler could register his brand as XOX and then the OX brand could be easily changed to XOX by adding an X, or the rustler could register and then he could change the OX brand by adding a bar through the cross of the X.

"The shrewdest rustler brand I have ever heard of was what was called the terrapin brand. It was made in the outline of a terrapin thus: . When this brand was placed on a critter it blotted out all other markes and left only the terrapin brand showing.

"A part of our range work was watching for rustlers. The range rider rode from one [pint?] to the other using a spyglass constantly. When any strange [?] men were seen an investigation followed. The rancher who did not keep a constant vigil would find his cattle count short.

"If a buyer bought such a herd, accepting book count, in a short time he would be singing one of the old range songs which was the following: "Oh, he said that he had 'em, but damn him he lied. Damn him he lied, damn him he lied. [??????] my brand on

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"However, even range count didn't always keep a buyer from singing, 'Oh, he said he had 'em, but damn him he lied.' A number of sales were made [?] which some of the cattle were counted twice or more. The most spectacular event of double counting was did at Buffalo [Gap?].

"The Gap is a narrow passage way between two butts and between the two butts was where the counting took place. Waddies drove the cattle up to the [entrance?] and as the animals were counted, they were driven on through to the opposite side. At the opposite ride of the hills other cowhands were stationed and they drove the counted cattle back to [here?] the uncounted cattle were being held. Thus the counted critters joined the procession of a counted cattle and were recounted.

"During the later part of the 11 year period I worked for the Hughes outfit the country began to change from an open [?] to a fence range. Settlers were developing farms and the result of this change was a westward movement of the cattle ranchers to the plains section where the open range was still existing.

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I foresaw the elimination of the open range in [?] co., region and calculated I would be working on a farm, unless I followed the westward movement of the ranches. This situation caused me to return to [Nacodoches?] co., and engage in farming, which I followed for a number of years. In my middle life I discontinued farming and entered the mercantile business, and I have [falloed?] the business up todote.